

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JOHANN 01034 240828Z
ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 AF-04 EUR-08 IO-06 ISO-00 SS-15 NSCE-00
AID-01 SSO-00 /038 W

-----038075 240839Z /14

O 240735Z APR 78

FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7592

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL DURBAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MADRID IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MBABANE IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS JOHANNESBURG 1034

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS : OREP

SUBJECT: CODEL GILMAN

1. JOHANNESBURG'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 24 GAVE FRONT-PAGE
COVERAGE TO STORY OF CODEL GILMAN'S SUCCESSFUL MISSION IN
EFFECTING HAND-OVER OF ISRAELI CITIZEN MIRON MARKUS AT
MOZAMBIQUE-SWAZILAND BORDER POST AT 1700 APRIL 23. FOLLOWING
IS ARTICLE IN RAND DAILY MAIL (PAGE ONE, APRIL 24, OTHER
ARTICLES BY POUCH, PRESS RELEASE BY SEPTTEL).

2. BEGIN QUOTE: FRELIMO FREES PILOT IN THREE-WAY DEAL.

GOBA BORDER POST.

A YOUNG ISRAELI, WHO SURVIVED A MACHINEGUN ATTACK BY
FRELIMO AFTER HIS PLANE FORCE-LANDED IN MOZAMBIQUE WAS
RELEASED AT THE SWAZILAND-MOZAMBIQUE BORDER LAST NIGHT IN AN
INTERNATIONAL PRISONER EXCHANGE ALSO INVOLVING AN EAST GERMAN
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SPY AND AN AMERICAN STUDENT HELD IN EAST BERLIN.

LOOKING PALE AND DISBELIEVING, MR MIRON MARKUS, 24,
WAS ESCORTED TO THE REMOTE BUSHVELD BORDER POST AND INTO THE
ARMS OF HIS SOUTH AFRICAN WIFE, MARILY, 25.

"I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE THIS IS REAL", HE SAID, CLINGING

TIGHTLY TO HIS WIFE WHILE RELATIVES WEPT.

" I NEVER GAVE UP HOPE -- THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN HANGING MYSELF -- BUT I DIDN'T KNOW UNTIL 3 PM WHEN THEY FETCHED ME AT MACHAVA PRISON THAT I WAS BEING FREED".

HIS NIGHTMARE ORDEAL BEGAN ON SEPTEMBER 4, 1976, WHEN HE AND HIS RHODESIAN BROTHER-IN-LAW, MR JACKIE BLOCH, 26, SET OFF ON A FLIGHT FROM BULAWAYO TO PIETERSBURG IN A FOURSEATER CESSNA 170.

NEAR THE RHODESIAN-SOUTH AFRICAN BORDER THEY HEADED INTO STORM CONDITIONS AND INADVERTENTLY CROSSED INTO MOZAMBIQUE WHILE TRYING TO FIND A LANDING STRIP.

FINALLY WITH FUEL DANGEROUSLY LOW, THEY LANDED AT CHIQUALAQUALA WHERE FRELIMO SOLDIERS ARMED WITH RUSSIAN AK-47 WEAPONS RIDDLED THE AIRCRAFT WITH MACHINEGUN FIRE.

MR BLOCH DIED INSTANTLY . MR MARKUS SUFFERED A HEAD WOUND FROM A PIECE OF FLYING METAL AND WAS WOUNDED IN THE CHEST, AN ARM AND A HIP.

RADIO MOZAMBIQUE CLAIMED FRELIMO HAD SHOT A "SPY PLANE" DOWN, BUT MR MARKUS WAS ADAMANT:

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"WE WERE ON THE GROUND WHEN THEY OPENED FIRE".

FOR MONTHS CONFUSION SURROUNDED HIS PREDICAMENT UNTIL NEWS FINALLY LEAKED OUT THAT HE WAS ALIVE AND IN MACHAVA.

AN INCREDIBLE SERIES OF UNDERCOVER MEETINGS IN DIFFERENT CAPITALS OF THE WORLD FOLLOWED UNTIL AGREEMENT WAS REACHED BETWEEN ISRAEL, THE UNITED STATES, EAST GERMANY AND MOZAMBIQUE THAT:

-- MR MARKUS WOULD BE RELEASED AT GOBA BORDER POST YESTERDAY.
-- CONVICTED EAST GERMAN SPY ROBERT G THOMPSON, WHO WAS JAILED IN 1965 FOR ESPIONAGE, WOULD BE RELEASED FROM THE LEWISBURG FEDERAL PENITENTIARY, PENNSYLVANIA, ON APRIL 30.

-- AMERICAN STUDENT MR ALAN VAN NORMAN, 22 , CAUGHT TRYING TO SMUGGLE A GERMAN DOCTOR AND HIS WIFE, AND THEIR SON INTO WEST GERMANY IN THE BOOT OF HIS CAR ON FEBRUARY 8, 1977, WOULD BE FREED IN EAST BERLIN ON MAY 1.

KEY FIGURES IN THE BEHIND-THE-SCENES MANOEUVRES TO SECURE MR. MARKUS' RELEASE INCLUDED ISRAELI OFFICIAL MR SHABTAI

KALMONOWITCH, NEW YORK CONGRESSMAN MR BEN GILMAN, AND NEW
YORK RABBI RONNIE GREENWALD.

AT JAN SMUTS AIRPORT HE WAS TREATED TO A CHAMPAGNE
WELCOME WITH THE PROMISE OF A SOFT HOTEL BED AND HIS FIRST
HOT BATH IN 20 MONTHS. END QUOTE.
JOHNSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CODELS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978JOHANN01034
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780174-0317
Format: TEL
From: JOHANNESBURG
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780425/aaaaaapt.tel
Line Count: 123
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b3d2c9a8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION H
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2872764
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CODEL GILMAN
TAGS: OREP, US, SF, (GILMAN, BENJAMIN A)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b3d2c9a8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014